

The voice of Kalimpong

Himalayan Times

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p4
HE DIED
YOUNG...
D.R.S.B.RAI
By B.R.Rai
Chamling

On reading
PSEUDO history
Dr.S.B.Wangyel
p6

p9
NEPALI
Vs.
Nepalese
by vimal
khawas

Kalimpong girl
scripts change
in mans world...
by
Sandip C. Jain
p 12

p 14
moving
mountains
By Pravin
Moktan

LIVING DEAD

If the Superintendent of Police of North 24 Parganas, Mr. Pravin Kumar is right then I am scared- really scared... Because if he is right then on the 3rd of October 05, I had a one to one (and a cup of tea) with a ghost!!!!

Deception, Deceit, Injustice

Pratap Lama, in dark glasses and an umbrella in hand is as alive as any one of us but in the eyes of S.P. Pravin Kumar, he is no longer a resident of mother Earth. In a shocking tale of betrayal and injustice, a man alive and kicking has been declared dead- that too in a court of law!!!

Pratap Lama, 66, a resident of Primtam Road (near SSB camp) is a former Sub Inspector with the West Bengal Police. This shocking tale of deceit, deception and injustice started a quarter of a century back in the year 1980 when Lama was taken ill and had to go on leave while he was posted in Cooch Behar. He rejoined duty in June 1981 only to find an eight point charge sheet against him. His plea for a lawyer or a retired Police Officer so that his side of the story could be properly explained was rejected and he was later suspended from service. "I still do not know the actual reasons for my suspension", says Lama.

In 1982, after a written plea to the then DIG he was given assurances that all the wrongs committed against him would be corrected and he would be reinstated. When this assurance too turned out to be a false one, Lama moved the High Court but in 1985 alarmed at the possibility of a rap from the judiciary, the then Director General of Police of the state, coaxed Lama to withdraw the case. "I withdrew the case since the DG convinced me that all cases against me would be withdrawn and I would be reinstated and adequate compensation would be paid to me", says Lama. But very soon Lama realized that this time too he had been taken for a ride.

In his quest for justice he then approached the Service Tribunal but here too his case could not be heard due to the fact that the case had become too old. Left with no other options he once again knocked at the doors of the High Court. It was here that the most bizarre and shocking incident took place when on the 15th of September 2003, the State advocate on the basis of a report filed by the SP of Cooch Behar (later SP of North 24 Parganas), Mr. Pravin Kumar, stated that Lama was no longer alive although he was very much in flesh and blood and residing in Kalimpong.

Now Lama was left fighting two battles – one trying to fight all the injustice melted out to him and the second trying to prove the fact that he was very much alive.

The second battle he has managed to win after he produced proof of being "alive" before the honourable court but as far as the battle for "justice" is concerned, Lama still hope and prays that one day justice will finally be delivered. ■



EDITORIAL

The Sino-Indian trade through Nathula Pass is definitely not for the weak hearted – not just merely for the fact that the trade will be conducted in one of the harshest possible terrains of the world but for several other reasons.

My friend, a senior journalist in Sikkim who has been following the proposed opening of the trade route very closely, says that at the moment probably the only people seemingly profiting from the proposed trade are the heart specialists of Siliguri and Gangtok!! The latest postponement of the opening date (from the 2nd of October 2005 to March 2006) has probably sent another group of over eager traders to these heart specialists, unable to cop up with the tremendous stress and strains that the constant deferment is causing them.

While how much Sikkim will actually benefit from the opening of the trade route is yet to be seen, one thing that is certain is that Sikkim and the Sikkimese people are extremely lucky for having people at the highest level pushing for their interest. The Nathula route despite not being the most favourable one was still the ultimate choice not because of any other reason but for the fact that Chamling and his cabinet played the right cards and spoke to the right people in favour of this route.

The Jelepala route, though being the traditional one and also an all weather one (the Nathula route is open for only about half the year), was not even considered simply because of the fact that no one was there to speak for its benefits. While the West Bengal government is hardly concerned which of the two Passes was opened (after all Siliguri will benefit either way irrespective of which Pass opens) what is suprising is that neither the DGHC nor the local MP or for that matter the local Chamber of Commerce (which is useless any way), did anything to press our case. Kalimpong once the hub of trade with Tibet has now been relegated to such a distant background that it has all but disappeared from the radar, as far as the Tibet trade is concerned and we have no one but ourselves to blame. How can we expect to have a bite of the pie when we did not even asks for it in the first place – after all even a mother does not feed her child till it cries.

But I am of the opinion that all is still not lost. Infact Kalimpong being bypassed as far as the trade is concerned could be a blessing in disguise for now we can always press for the opening of the Jelepala Pass as a tourist destination. We probably have more to gain if Jelepala is opened for the tourists rather than for the traders. Think of all the employment it will generate and all the revenue that it will rake in for the town. It would do for Kalimpong tourism what the opening of the Nathula did for tourism in Sikkim. The benefits and the rewards are too lucrative for us to let this opportunity slip by.

Lets hope our leaders speak for us in this regard before its too late again!!!

Dear Editor,

While appreciating the good quality and highly interesting articles that your magazine has been carrying of late I would like to point out that there are absolutely no columns in your magazine that cater to the interest of the women of today.

There could be several columns that you could run on a regular basis in the Himalayan Times like a column on gardening or one on receipes or a gossipie column which would interest an average women.

Also a penfriend column could be started where people from the town could find others here in Kalimpong who share similar interests and views.

I also feel that each issue of himalayan times looks exactly like the one before due to the fact that the layout and designs are almost the same each issue.

Sadhana Basnet

Kalimpong

Dear Sir,

The article on Gandhi Ashram by Barbara Grover in Vol 2 Issue 12 for Himlayan Times made really interesting reading and was a fitting tribute to the man who many refered to as the Gandhi of Kalimpong. While Father McGuire's contributions can never be fully expressed in words what worries me is what would now happen to the children at Gandhi Ashram. Will those who are in charge actually be able to carry forward the works and vision of Father McGuire or will the children lose their future along with their beloved father.

Kalimpong owes it to the memory of Father McGuire to carry forward his vision and to see that the work that he started and did for so long does not get derailed anywhere.

Susan Miller

(by e-mail from Kent in England)

DO YOU HAVE ANY THING THAT
YOU WANT TO SHARE WITH THE
REST OF

KALIMPONG???

HAVE YOUR SAY AT

YOUR
PAGE

Why I want to sell Honda generators in Kalimpong

Wg. Cdr. Prafulla Rao

Don't fall off the chair when you read the next sentence....

As per the Governmentt, W. Bengal is a power surplus state. Believe it or not!!!!!!

For most of us in Kalimpong, which has been reeling under massive power cuts from the end of September 05 onwards, this is a laughable statement and having had enough of power outages, we (some members of Hotel and Restaurant Association of Kalimpong and Kalimpong Consumer Association) met officials of W.B.S.E.B (West Bengal State Electricity Board) on 21October 2005 after 3 consecutive days of power cuts due to "sub-station maintenance" (18Oct-20Oct05). What we were learned was even more shocking.

We were told (explicitly!), that in the years to come, power problems in Kalimpong would get WORSE, not better. So next year, expect more breakdowns than in 2005!

WHY?? Isn't this a power surplus state? I thought this was the 21st century and the age where cutting edge technology exists in every field?

Quite simply because there is just one Sub-Station in Kalimpong town with only a few "circuits" some of which, are already overloaded. The most breakdown-prone circuit is, of course, "Town II", which stretches from one end of Kalimpong, i.e. the Atisha Road area, to the other end, i.e. to Deolo and beyond (encompassing many areas which are on the fringes of the town e.g. Bhalukhop and Pudung). Only the "main" town comes under the "Town I" circuit which till date, is small and has the least breakdowns. Then, there is also the "M.E.S" (Defense) circuit.

They told us that each day more houses and even entire busties are getting electrified and thus

jumping onto a bandwagon which is already groaning under the existing load. Hence, the increase in the number of breakdowns. Also, in the case of "Town II" circuit, a fault at 8th mile could trigger off a breakdown in Tirpai, Deolo or in Pudung since they

are all on the same circuit- as it did on 20Oct05, leading to a 12hr blackout. In this regard, it is unfortunate that the Sub-Divisional Hospital, along with many prominent schools and hotels, is on "Town II", the circuit with endemic power problems.

So, is there no technical solution to this?

No. Not unless another Sub Station is established in Kalimpong.

What is the problem in that? Land!

Incredibly, with thousands of acres under the S.D.O. and the Forest Dept, no land is available to the W.B.S.E.B, to build another sub-station so that Kalimpong may literally see a light at the end of the tunnel.

Therefore, until W.B.S.E.B gets land, until plans are passed at Vidyut Bhavan, until MANY, MANY palms are greased the power situation in Kalimpong will actually get worse, year after year.

So why don't you buy a red hot Honda generator from me?

At least you won't have to live like a cave man...

Aur hum banenge crorepati! ■

NO THERE IS NOTHING WRONG WITH THE ABOVE PICTURE!!! This could be what your living room may look like in times to come without electricity.

In response to the scores of requests received by us from our readers we are starting a friends column, where if you are looking for new friends, you can post your name and telephone number alongwith your hobbies and interest. Please send your name, age and phone number to
htfriends,himalayantimes, post box 49, kalimpong

He died young to live on forever in our hearts

Dr. Sashi Bhusan Rai

By B.R.Rai Chamling



Late Dr. Sashi Bhusan Rai

One fine summer morning of the early sixties, a boy seemingly turned six or so, accompanied his mother to call at our home. At the behest of his mother, he meekly approached me in my living-room with his little soft palms folded and shortly clipped head lowered down, whispering hesitantly – ‘Uncle, Dhog!’

So enchanting his childlike bearing was to me that repaying his regard, involuntarily, my unbridled tongue

blurted out to know what his name was. ‘Mittu’ – he replied placidly.

“Oh! What a suitable sobriquet indeed! You really must be sweet to one and all at home then!” – avidity prompted me to ask him further- ‘which school and in what standard?’

‘At Pudung School in class five’-he answered promptly.

‘And what do you want to be in your life’-I pestered him like a tutor living normally a life of a question-box.

At this, overhearing our conversations, his mother from the kitchen even though, engrossed in confabulation with my better-half, her ex-class mate, recalling the happenings of both the bygone and the present, interrupted us by unfolding her son’s cherished vision giggling, in a tone with a tinge of absurdity of it – “Well brother, do

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FUTURE OF KALIMPONG



Master Prajal & Pravesh Ghimiray

you want to know what he wants to become in life? -an M.B.B.S. doctor!’

‘Is it so! A native Gorkha doctor!! What a great pride would it be to our community as a whole!-patting his back I added – ‘you must have been excelling in mathematical and other allied science courses then? The backbone of your materializing so noble a career that you have chosen determinately.’

“They are his favourite subjects. In fact, the secret of his being a topper and bagging double promotions twice is his obtaining high scores in these fields in particular”-were the versions of his mother substantiating his excellence profusely.

Being so close to us barely for some hours and though oblivious physically, his first and last meet with us on that single day, proved to be serendipitous, foreboding its spiritual significance which could be realized eventually-who and what he was in reality, in a mere form of humanity.

True to his iron-determination, this sagacious boy, our late Sashi Bhushan Rai-The “Mittu” emerged out of the much-coveted medical arena, qualifying himself superbly, who never knew to be the second best in both educational and medical spheres as well and to prove his metal, his topping the list in the selection test held in the district level as a candidate for undergoing the medical course bore adequate testimony.

A man of versatile character, having awareness of the society and the human values, nay a genius, a pick of the basket of the community he was, endowed with clairvoyance to foresee what he was cut-out for!

Being a heart specialist, he was well aware that a human-heart is not a mere fragile lump of flesh mingled with bloody arterial-veins-a feckless sponsor of mortal longevity but, intrinsically a tenement of spiritual love, peace and divinity too!

What a flabbergasting phenomenon-to succumb to the inevitability of death! Counselling and prescribing the art of living, even the specialists die young, while we lugubriously be an inanimate counterpart of the cortege merely to sprinkle a handful of humid arenaceous particles (water-soaked sandy dusts) over the forlorn coffin in the formal form of last tribute!, an ostensibly monotonous tradition of rituals handed-down to us by our forefathers to observe in a cyclic order so persistently.

Treating the diseased in thousands as well as witnessing the demise of many of them, a vital part of the game of medical jugglery to play equally with the myriad of illusory maladies and deaths, our Doctor Sashi, 48, breathed his last in the recent past undauntedly, preferring to be laid to rest close to his mother’s grave (Late Kamala Rai) who had left him almost three decades ago, in his ancestral homeland at Pudung Busty, Kalimpong, ignoring every other available suitable places.

To him-”To live the life of a doctor was temporal, but to be in reunion with his beloved departed mother soul was eternal.”

May “Jankari .Com” his literally creation play a pioneering role of an ‘Epitaph’, catering his eventful contributions to the society, as unforgettable moments. ■

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On Reading

"PSEUDO HISTORY" — By BIDHAN GOLAY

— Dr . S . B . W A N G Y E L —

In the essay mentioned above (September 2005) it was interesting to read that “the history of Darjeeling lie(s) languished and battered in the prison (-)house of academic complacency” and that it is so because the accounts given by European writers of yore have “become canonical texts for all future production of knowledge about our community from without and more regrettably from within.” Bidhan Golay, fortunately, lets Dr Kumar Pradhan off the hook of this ‘complacency’ because of the historian’s classic book, “The Gorkha Conquests”. There is no denying that this book is MONUMENTAL for such a well-documented book on the history of the ‘Nepal’ Gorkhas (note: not Darjeeling Gorkhas) is yet to hit the stands. But it must be said that even Kumar borrows greatly from sources that are European, and as a historian he has the right to do so for we Gorkhas/Nepalis have been such poor keepers of our own records (but we are a changing). The strength or weakness never lies in sourcing references but always in the conclusion that is eventually derived from them. Dr. Pradhan’s conclusions are worthy of the highest honor but, I can’t help mentioning again, that the book has more to do with Nepal than with us. Pradhan, who is no stranger to me, is more cherished in the district particularly for his other works, and rightfully so. His “Pahilo Pahar” (1982) traces the evolution of the Nepali Society in Darjeeling and then goes on to a study of the development of Nepali literature and finally culminates in a recapture of the course taken by the district’s theatrical passage. The other work that endears him to us is “A History of Nepali Literature” (1984) and that endearment finds its fodder, once again, from the fact that it deals with Darjeeling writers than those from across the border.



Our folks would rather pick up a Stardust or a Filmfare than a Diyalo or Baisalu despite the fact that our journals are senior and cost a trifle compared to the glossies. How many of us actively support Sunchari and how many of us supported Aja Bholi

Had Golay made the statement, say sixty years ago, that Darjeeling historians were “caught in a time warp” of “fixation with imperialist history” he probably would have had an iota of merit. However, in the last half century our historians have been writing meaningful history, albeit in Nepali and not in the imperial language, and the historians’ woe is not in the writing but in the readership. Our folks would rather pick up a Stardust or a Filmfare than a Diyalo or Baisalu despite the fact that our journals are senior and cost a trifle compared to the glossies. How many of us actively support Sunchari and how many of us supported Aja Bholi! Now broaden that question to the

works of the native historians and we will realize that the problem is not a dearth of writers but that of supporters. Jiwan Namdung, Salon Karthak, Lalit Pariyar, Tanka Bahadur Subba, Dik B. Dewan, Harka Bahadur Chhetri etc are all writers of native history but how many of their books do we have on our shelves? Are we aware that Purna Gurung (Nirupam) researched and wrote an account (Itihaslay Birsyeko Nousena Bidroh) of the heroism of Chandrakumar Sharma and Pushpakumar Gurung in the Naval Mutiny of 1946. Of the other Gorkha heroes we have accounts like “Hamra Swatantra Senani” (Nepali Sahitya

Prachar Samity, Siliguri), “Bir Jatikoko Amar Kahani” (M.P. Rai), “Srasta: Bharitiya Nepali Sahid Bishesanka” which chronicles with facsimiles, photographs and copies of citations and other documents the biographies of 160 Gorkha martyrs. But of course, we must not concern

ourselves only with brawn and in the more cerebral sphere we have historians who concern themselves with the affairs of literature, language, theatre, music, social emancipation etc. On the progress of Nepali literature in Kalimpong alone we have full 200 pages of Dayaratna S. V.'s "Nepali Nibandh Yatra", on a broader canvas is Raaj Narayan Pradhan's "Darjeelingka Katha ra Kathakar", Volume I & II, Asit Rai's "Bharatiya Nepali Sahityako Bikaskrama" and Ghaneshyam Nepal's "Nepali Sahityako Parichyatmak Itihas". To this, vastly incomplete list, may I also add Heera Chhetri's work on a single subject, Nepali journals, titled "Bharateli Nepali Patra-Patrikako Shatabdi, 1886-1986" and there is the magnum opus that deals with a gamut of subjects under label "Brihat Samolochana" consisting of no less than 892 pages. There is even an exhaustive study of the theatre in Indrabahadur Rai's "Darjeelingma Nepali Natakko Ardhashatabdi". The struggle for the recognition of the Nepali language also finds good mention in Siva Pradhan's "Bhasik Andolan – Safaltako Goretoma" and Dr. Manikumar Sharma's "Gorkha Bhasa, Ek Chintan" and this is to quote just a couple not because of the lack of books but because of lack of space: Himalayan Times alas has just eight-pages. Now let us move on to the documentation of our political history and it is here that we find a good grazing ground. The urge for brevity and space constraints will, once again, limit the citing of most books but let us begin by mentioning the works of the late Ambar Pradhan, our illustrious reporter Keshav Pradhan's father, who gave us "Darjeeling Jilako Itihasik Andolan: Ek Sarwekchan" and "Khoj – Mato ani Chinhariko". Both well researched and with no colonial hangovers. Kalimpong's own Bhagirath Rawat's "Baas Salkiraheko Chha" and "Matoko Maya" stirred the revolutionary blood in us during the 'andolan' days. There is nothing 'subaltern' in them. On a broader scope there is Jayanarayan

Pradhan's "Nang ra Masu" which dissects the Indian Gorkha's struggle for national identity and there is also the somewhat

I can empathize with Golay for there are more crap on the streets than good books but our best criticism would be to ignore the dung and support our better historians by buying their books. Help them earn something out of their noble effort and be assured that they will then ride the success with even profounder stuff.

heavy "Hamra Byakti ra Byaktiwa" by Jiwan Labar. This collection of biographies enlightens us that Pasang Bagbal, a name

and fame lost in the haze of antiquity, gave us many hit songs including "Hey kanch malai sunko tara khasai deona...". Labar brings to life the first Nepali Deputy Magistrate (Chabilal Gahatraj, 1907), D.B Pariyar (the first Nepali Producer-Director of Nepali film: Satya Harishchandra, 1951), the First IAS (Lalit Pariyar), internationally acclaimed artist (Goray Douglas), our first Olympian (C.S. Gurung) and a host of other historically meaningful characters. Finally, I it is necessary to mention the grand old man of Nepali literature, Indrabahadur Rai, to whose credit is five colossal volumes of 3,012 pages. Although it is not intended, they are fortunately punctuated heavily with our history.

I can empathize with Golay for there are more crap on the streets than good books but our best criticism would be to ignore the dung and support our better historians by buying their books. Help them earn something out of their noble effort and be assured that they will then ride the success with even profounder stuff. (N.B. None of the books quoted have used materials from authors mentioned by Golay viz. Vansittart, Hooker & O'Malley.) ■

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TAE-KWON-DO

Team Kalimpong hits brotherhood punch

By Sandip C. Jain

"Cometh the time, cometh the man" goes an old saying- for the members of the Gorkha Hill Tae Kwon Do Association of Kalimpong (GHTA) this sure was the case. Not only did the "man cometh" but with it cometh eight Gold, six Silver and nine bronze medals and more importantly "cometh" a heap of self confidence and self belief.

In its more than a decade of existence GHTA had always been on the fringe of competitive Tae Kwon Do. Forget about winning Gold medals in any National level tournaments even being able to participate in one was a battle. Now not only have they participated in the World United Tae Kwon Do Championship but have also surprised everyone (including themselves) by coming back with 23 medals including eight golds and standing fourth in the Medals Tally.

The talent of course was there – but the team was more of a Rag-tag outfit due to lack of financial support and technical back up. It needed someone who could polish up the talent and

teach them the finer points of the game. This was when Sherap Lepcha, a local youth in service with the West Bengal Police as a Sub Inspector, stepped it. Being a Black Belt Two Dan himself, Sherap on the very first glance realized the immense potentials of the young proponents of this martial art in Kalimpong. The Club acutely needed funds and several members were fighting their bouts with nothing but sheer grit, courage and determination and nothing much more. Some did not even have a proper pair of shoes to wear for practice- forget about having one to fight in a tournament. Practicing on a Mat or fighting with protective gears was just a dream and seeing contestants from other team wearing Track-suits, evoked desires to own one.

Sherap had his work cut out from the first day he took over as the guide and mentor of the club. Not only was he required to teach the members the finer points of the game, he was also required to instill within them the confidence they

required to compete and win against the best. Finance too needed to be taken care of. He soon realized that with time running short (for the World United Tae Kwon Do Championship) intense preparation was required and every member of the team needed to focus fully at nothing else but the tournament. Hence he arranged for all twenty eight members of the team to stay together under one roof so that their undivided attention was focused on Tae Kwon Do. And where else could 28 people find room considering their sorry financial conditions??? In Sheraps three roomed house of- course!! So Sherap and his wife Susan suddenly found themselves with an extended family. All their requirement were met by them with help from friends and well wishers.

All their efforts have paid rich dividends now- not only did the team win 23 medals in the Championship but more importantly the rag tag team of the past is now a lean and mean fighting machine. The confidence of the team is sky high and can be measured by what one of the Gold medalist, Arpan Gurung says, "Now we are waiting for the State Championship to be held and I am sure we will sweep the medals tally there".

Sherap too is overjoyed, to say the least, but is modest enough to say, "All I did was act as their guide- their success is all due to their hard work and determination. ■



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N e p a l i v / s N e p a l e s e i n I n d i a

By Vimal Khawas

One of my friends, recently, complained to me of being verbally abused by a lady in New Delhi on the pretext that her sari accidentally happened to mesh with the edge of his motorcycle. She, allegedly, roared at him by means of very improper and unfounded statements as far as the Nepali speaking Indians are concerned. “You Nepalese! You foreigners! I know you people! You people do not know how to live!” Etc were some of her utterances.

The point here is not a mere abuse of an individual by another individual but it signifies a much larger issue that needs serious debate and discourse among the responsible Nepali speaking Indian Nationals. The victim is a bonafide citizen of India and a permanent resident of Kalimpong located in the district of Darjeeling, West Bengal. Like many other Indians he too is struggling in Delhi in search of better economic pastures. There are Bengalis, and Punjabis, for example, with their counterparts residing in other countries like Bangladesh and Pakistan respectively. But they have never been lamented as the Bangladeshis or Pakistani Punjabis. In our case, however, the term Nepalese or Foreigner has often been used by the mainstream Indians. The

above instance is only one of the relevant examples of the serious situation prevailing across the spaces of the Indian Territory (possibly excluding Darjeeling Hills). So where is the problem? Where has the

situation gone wrong? Why we (Nepali speaking Indians) are often confused with the Nepalese of Nepal? Why don't the mainstream Indians appreciate that there are about a crore Nepalis who have been the bonafide citizens of the Republic of India since historic past?

Before going further with the discussion, let us be clear with the terms ‘Nepalese’ and ‘Nepali’.

The former is essentially used to represent people with Nepalese Citizenship, i.e. Of Nepal, while the latter term is used to denote the Nepali speaking Indian Nationals. ‘Nepalese’ refer to the national identity or nationality of the people of Nepal while the term ‘Nepali’ connotes the ethnic identity of the Indian Nepalis. Bengali, Tamil, Oriya, Punjabi etc are all ethnic identities of respective social groups with Indian

Nationality.

This is a citizenship issue that we have been facing since generations. Finding the solution to this problem was one of the major objectives of ‘Gorkhaland’ agitation. Two of the major objectives of



Why don't the mainstream Indians appreciate that there are about a crore Nepalis who have been the bonafide citizens of the Republic of India since historic past?

‘Gorkhaland’ agitation needs to be quoted in this context: they read, thus 1) The question of citizenship of the settled Gorkhas should be resolved on the basis of incorporation of territories (as provided for in Section 7 of the Indian Citizenship Act, 1955) and for this purpose a notification should be issued by the Government of India; and 2) Inclusion of Gorkha language in the Eighth Schedule of the Constitution. One of the main reasons behind using the term ‘Gorkha’ by the proponents of the above agitation was to differentiate themselves from the Nepalese of Nepal and avoid the overlap of the term and subsequent negative impacts.

It is not clear with respect to the status of the former objective. However, as far as the question of Gorkha Language is concerned, Nepali language was included in the Eighth Schedule of the Constitution of India in early 1990s. The inclusion of Nepali language in the Eighth Schedule gave the Nepali speaking Indians some relief. But the objective was to register the language as Gorkha and not Nepali. Nepali is the national language of Nepal! Ironically, the settled Indian Nepalis still have to face the wrath of the mainstream Indians in a variety of occasions. Abuses both physical and oral are often inflicted to the Nepali speakers in the mainland India on every a small pretext. Such offences are often meted out to the Nepali speakers on the assumption that they are the citizens of Nepal and have

crossed over to the Indian soils for economic reasons.

It is important to be clear at this point that Nepalese from Nepal have scattered across the length and breath of the Indian Territory of late. They are majorly into the blue color jobs notably in hotel industry, domestic helps, general canteens/dhabas and security services. Their presence in the Indian soils have gone up by leaps and bound in the last 5 decades. They are here mainly as a seasonal migrant workers who would visit their country from time to time. Two important factors need serious debate here. This becomes crucial in the context of the confusion and the resultant negative impacts on the settled Indian Nepalis.

First, India and Nepal signed a Treaty of Peace and Friendship, in July 31, 1950.

Among other things article 7 the treaty grants, on reciprocal basis, to the nationals of one country in the territories of the other the same privileges in the matter of residence, ownership of property, participation in trade and commerce, movement and privileges of a similar nature. The treaty is, however, silent with respect to the impact of such agreement on the already settled and bonafide Nepali Indians. Over the years on the strength of this agreement Nepalese have been crossing the borders and spreading across the spaces of the Indian Territory. For example, over 100 fourth grade employees in

Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi consist of the Nepalese. They are mainly engaged in security, hostel messes, canteens and dhaba of the university. Likewise they have spread all over Delhi, Mumbai, Ahmedabad and other places of India. They have also not spared the rural ecologies of India. For instance most of the seasonal labourers for potato and pea cultivation in Lahaul-Spiti region of Himachal Pradesh and Ladakh consist of seasonal migrants of Nepalese origin.

Second, the crux of the issue has been the ill reputation carried by the Nepalese across the Indianspaces. And the situation is becoming worse with time. Take the following points

It is important to be clear at this point that Nepalese from Nepal have scattered across the length and breath of the Indian Territory of late. They are majorly into the blue color jobs notably in hotel industry, domestic helps, general canteens/dhabas and security services.

that appeared in the leading news daily in the Capital as examples: ‘A Nepalese servant strangles 60 year old woman’, ‘A Nepalese servant killed 62 year old businessman’, ‘A retired lieutenant colonel and his wife were murdered by their

Nepalese servant’. The media further cautions the citizens of Delhi: ‘Avoid employing servants from areas like Nepal as Nepalese servant is fraught with danger’. What are the repercussions of such activities of the Nepalese on the settled Nepali speaking Indians? They look



identical; speak almost the same language with some dialectical variations; and bear similar names.

Further, the cleaning up operations across the North-East India in the last three decades has also been the result of the massive influx of the Nepalese migrants encouraged by the so-called Indo-Nepal Friendship Treaty of 1950. These mobile migrant Nepalese come and go depending upon the economic situation of the region where they

work and also their own economic health. The consequences of their deeds and misdeeds have however to be borne by the settled Indian Nepalis. This has been the case in the whole of North-East India and other parts of the country. And the recent abuse of my friend by a mainstream lady in Delhi is the result of one such negative image created by the

Nepalese counterparts on the Indian soil!!

As noted earlier, one of the serious culprits that have discolored the settled Indian Nepalis and put them in dark has been the Indo-Nepal Friendship Treaty of 1950. The Government of India either needs to abrogate this treaty or the settled Indian Nepalis have to be protected, from such onslaughts, through some other alternative(s). We need leaders in this connection to put forth the issue before New Delhi. We

need leaders with education, vision and farsightedness. The GNLF led 'Gorkhaland' agitation had rightly highlighted this grave issue before the relevant authorities in the 1980s. The agitation, however, died a worthless death before achieving any of its objectives. Mention should, however, be made that GNLF led by Mr. Ghisingh has been successful in bargaining and negotiating the alternative arrangement for the settled Indian Nepalis and other social groups of Darjeeling Hills through the recent talks held in New Delhi. In view of the situation this is the right time to highlight other relevant issues like the one highlighted above, before the government. Since Darjeeling Hills and Sikkim are the places where the Nepali speakers reside in majority, it is from these regions that voices towards these ends need to originate. The fruit of such endeavor should, however, benefit all the settled Nepali speaking Indians. ■

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KALIMPONG GIRL

SCRIPTS CHANGE I N

MANS WORLD

— Sandip C. Jain —

A news reporter, a cameraman, a stage dancer, a film artist, a film maker, a local TV channel owner – all very attractive careers – and I am sure any man would be more than just happy to be in any one of the above careers.

But what if you are told that there is someone right here in our very own Kalimpong who is into all the above professions all at once. The logical response I expect from the readers would be “Who is the lucky man??” Man?? Did I hear man?? Come on don’t be such a male chauvinist!! The person I am talking about is a girl and is non other than Sandhya Pradhan of Gorkha Channel.

Sandhya is like no other girl in town – besides owning Gorkha Channel where she is virtually a one man army- sorry a one women army- she is also a professional stage dancer, a film artist, a film script writer, a Tele film director, as well as a TV anchor, all roller into one.

30 year old Sandhya’s interest in performing art was imbued within her early in life when she was still in school. In Girls High School where she did her schooling, Sandhya was a regular on the school stage where her beautifully choreographed dances were acknowledged as the high light of each school function. In fact her fame had spread way beyond the boundaries of her school and by the time she finished her schooling she was already performing in stage shows all over the region. Acknowledgement of her talent came in the form of several district level dance awards that she received.

By the time she was in her early twenties she was already thinking beyond dancing and stage shows. In 1996 with the motive of promoting Nepali performing arts, an association by the name of “Gorkha Film Sangsthan” came into being in Kalimpong with people like Nayan Pradhan, Bimal Pradhan and others actively involved in trying to produce a film out of Kalimpong. In the same year they managed to produce a Tele film by the name of “Chaard Ko Bela” with Sandhya in the lead role. Though this was Sandhya’s maiden film venture- it actually induced buckets of tears from her- tears due to the fact that the original (and only) print of the film while still in the production stage, was fully destroyed due to a fire at the studio where the film was being edited. The film hence could never be screened for the public and all the hard work put in was all in vain. Now nine years since the heart breaking episode Sandhya says, “The regret that Chaard Ko Bela could never be screened for the public will always be there within me but then it was also a blessing in disguise. The film instilled within me the interest to learn the fine art of film making.” Sandhya say that the film was directed by Mr. Bhaskar Chhetri of Darjeeling and seeing him she learnt a lot about directing films. “My interest in directing films grew so much that I started taking an active interest in the making of that film and by the end of the film, I was almost the assistant director of the film”, says Sandhya.

Chaard Ko Bela instigated a wild fire within her to direct a film on her own. Her chance came in early 1999 when she along with others got together to form the Gorkha Channel. Gorkha Channel’s first



Tele Film was "Kasto Nasha" which was Sandhya's first directorial venture. This film about unemployment and loans was widely appreciated by all. Following this she directed another Nepali short film, "Maya" which was released in the year 2001. She was in effect the all in all of the film. In her words, "I was the director, producer, actor, beautician, spot boy and sweeper all rolled into one." Only the cinematography for the film was done by someone else.

The making of the film was another turning point in Sandhya's career- on the completion of the film she realized that the camerawork of the film did not match what she had conceptualized. She hence started to learn the fine art of cinematography and very soon she was adept in the art of using a camera.

Her talent and her dedication was noticed by the ace film maker and the pride of Kalimpong, Mr. Tulsi Ghimerey who gave her an opportunity to perform in the dance numbers in the superhit Nepali Film, "Lahaana". Lahaana opened up new doors for her and she took off to Kathmandu to work under Tulsi Ghimerey. Her first film there was "Durga" where she played a supporting role. Remembering her stint in Nepal she says, "Tulsi dai taught me a lot

on the art of filmmaking and I will forever be grateful to him." But despite being trained by the best in the business and despite getting job opportunities in some of the major channels of Nepal, Sandhya had to turn home wards due to certain pressing problems on the home front.

But talent shines whether in Kathmandu or in Kalimpong and after having come back here she was approached by Priyadarshani Productions of New Delhi who were

into making documentary films for Doordarshan TV. She was signed by the production house to act in three documentary films which were later shown on Doordarshan TV. The films, "Buraha Naukar", "Kishnay Soocha Tha" and "Andhabiswas", were shot in Sikkim and Sandhya played the lead role in all the three. The unique thing about the films was that although the films were based on Nepali culture, Nepali tradition and Nepali settings, the dialogue delivery was in Hindi. This was because the films were made for the wider national audience. Infact a repeat telecast of one of the films was made on Doordarshan as recently as on the 18th of May this year.

Sandhya presently works in the DGHC Cultural Department as an artist, dancer as well as the official camerawomen. Gorkha Channel which is her passion, creates and shows a two to three hour programme each Thursday in Kalimpong via the Sky Scan. She has also worked with NDTV when the Kohli episode took place in the town.

Says a fellow artist of Sandhya, "Sandhya's professional life can be a role model for other hill girls. She has proved that if you have the talent and dedication then even a female from the hills can script changes in a mans world!!!" ■

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**NANDAN'S
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In his story *madhestira* (towards the plains) by Bisheshwar Prasad Koirala, a group of down and out mountain dwellers trek to the plains in search of a better life.

The story can be read at many levels but the reality that forms the background of this tale cannot be escaped. For years now people have always moved down from the mountains to the plains to better themselves. Whether it is in search of jobs or for higher education the exodus has been inevitable. Contrast this scenario with what is portrayed in Ray's *Kanchenjunga*. Here a genteel Bengali family moves up to the mountains to ease out the tensions within.

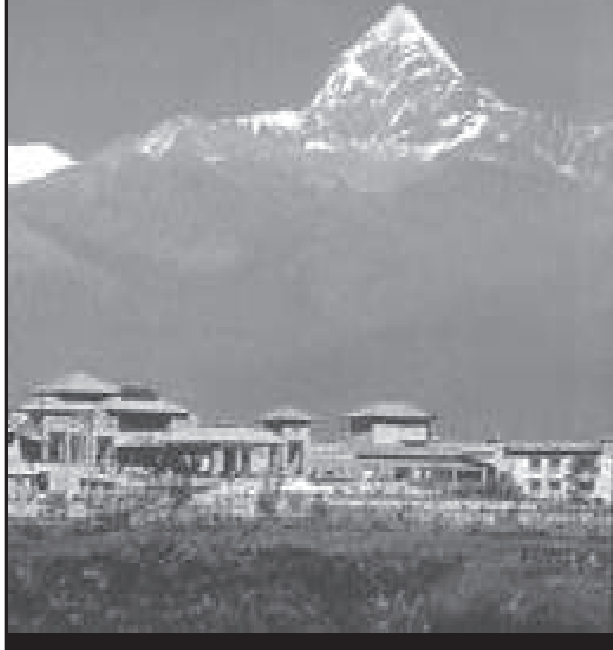
In these two fictionalised instances, we see a dichotomy of purposes. People move from the mountains to the plains for economic reasons, for higher studies, jobs or to 'see the world' in general. They do so because they perceive an inadequacy within them that only an exposure to the ways and the workings of the plains can compensate.

On the other hand the reverse movements from the plains to the mountains have taken place for entirely different reasons. The Bengali 'seasoner' who makes that uphill journey to ogle at the mountains with his family is doing so to find fulfilments that are not immediately material. The mountain is for the soul but the plains are for the body. While the plains provide the mountain man with the appendages to survive in an economic sense the mountains have, to a few of the plainsmen at least, imparted that salubriousness of climate so imperative to his sanity.

There is another aspect about these journeys. The hill dweller's move to the plains will throw him into contact with individuals and institutions with whom he will have to interact at many levels. It could be the conductor of a bus or a colleague at the university. These interactions are coloured by the prejudices and perceptions both negative and positive that each have of the other. The hill person who has just moved to the plains is an insecure individual forever imputing motives to even the most innocuous gestures of the plains person. It is not uncommon to find parents who are sending their children first time to the plains, telling them to be extra cautious in the way they build friendships and trusts. I remember a friend who had just moved into college at Delhi University

MOVING MOUNTAINS

by pravin moktan



being told by his grand parents to trust only the sardarji auto drivers, as these were understood to be the most sympathetic to the Gorkhas (the apparent reason for this being that each respected the martial background of the other). These presumptions take years to overcome and in many of the cases, the sort of experiences that one goes through in fact strengthens them only further.

The mountains and the climate for which the plainsman makes his sojourn, is on the other hand, the gift of nature and the tourist at a certain level is not beholden to any human for them. It is possible for the tourist to complete his circuit of the hills with the minimum possible

interaction with the local. If he can afford it, he could insulate himself from everything local and having had his fill of the natural beauty retreat with as little knowledge of the hill folk as he had when he first arrived. For the middle class for whom money is a factor their dealings with the local sometimes verge on the unpleasant. This is particularly true when touts and brokers prey on them the moment they land in the bus stands. Most of the times such contacts will have to be looked at, as irritants that have to be suffered like the bumpy roads, travel sicknesses and bad food. Thus to most of the tourists the hill folk are an incidental occurrence, something that cannot be avoided because they are just there. Their feelings towards the topography are however different.

Mountains have always had this quality of mystery about them. Compared to the plains that are an open book of geography so to speak, the hills and the mountains do not give in so easily to interpretation.

Mythologies have declared mountains the abode of gods. Rivers whose benevolence have spawned civilisations have also always sprung from them. Almost all gods, be it for the Hebrews, the Greeks, the Japanese, the Lepchas, the Incas or the Hindus, have resided in the mountains.

Holy men of many religions have found enlightenment during their various sojourns into the mountains. Mountains have often been used in religious literature as metaphors for spiritual and moral elevation.

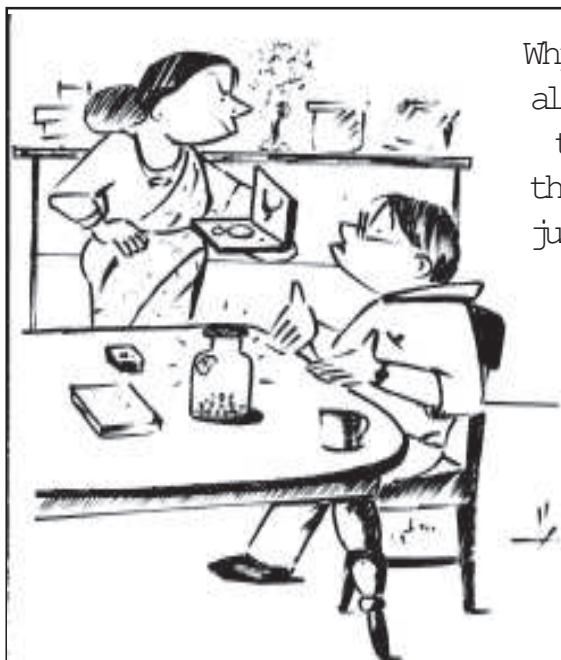
There have been myths about the mountain folk too. In a certain exotic sense they too have fascinated the plainsman. The lungs of the sherpa, the bravery of the Gorkha, the fabled beauty of the Yolmo women and the Yeti (a man if not human) to name a few have been ascribed qualities that are almost fantastic to the plains dweller. Even the nazis are said to have sent expeditions to the plateau of Tibet (a mountain nevertheless for our purpose) to find out for themselves how the Tibetans could survive in such harsh climes of their homeland. In their warped worldview these hardy men could perhaps qualify as being a geographically distant cousins of the supermen who would one day rule the world with them. But remove the extraordinary, the Shangri-La and the Everest from the scheme of things and come down to the ordinary reality of the hill folk and you will see that the appellation hill has always had a pejorative air

about it. The term hillbilly for example is defined by one dictionary as 'often disparaging, a person from the backwoods or other remote area, esp. from the mountains of the...'. The word paharey also evokes a feeling of rusticity, of a lack of refinement and grace and intellect.

For those in the Darjeeling hills the complex about being paharey is inherently inferior. And they too have in a sense 'mythologized' the plains folk. The Bengali brain for example is that fabled entity that is endowed with a superlative faculty to solve problems in maths. The paharey on the other hand is intrinsically limited by the constraints imposed on him by his paharey brain. Such misconceptions abound and the cumulative stresses that such notions give rise to, are at times vented out in gestures that are overt (as in the Gorkhaland. . . . movement) and subliminal (as in the penchant for a superficial westernisation). In the aspect of fashion and living at least the hill folk (lets limit ourselves to Darjeeling) assume some sort of superiority over the plainsmen. It is not uncommon to find unkind remarks being made about the dress sense of Bengalis. The plainsmen on the other hand are known to treat the music sense of the hill folks with a great deal of

deference. It is not unusual to find in the universities and the colleges, a certain type of student from the plains, who tends to gravitate towards their counterparts from the hills. Although elitist in their outlook and upbringing they have a great deal of empathy for the kind of things that the hill student holds dear (fashion, music). But as far as the majority of the plainsmen are concerned the hill person is a loutish individual thoroughly deserving of being stereotyped in terms of his capabilities (or rather the lack of them) and that one professional competency (read chowkidar).

It is a rather sad fact that such notions persist, being fuelled by the sort of images of the hill folks that one encounters in the media and the movies. It's a fact often repeated but revealing nonetheless that a company of the stature of Maruti should in one of their television advertisements make a couple of city slickers encounter a cute young 'kancha' in Ladakh. Not only does this oversight reveal a profound lack of knowledge about the ethnic make up of a prominent mountainous region of the country but also perpetuates the myth that countless movies have done before them- that the hills are still peopled by a certain type of creature called the 'kancha' and the 'kanchi'. The same persons that could perhaps have sprung from the fiction of BP mentioned earlier, to serve countless Indian city households in their cute, useful capacities as ubiquitous 'kanchas' and 'kanchis'. ■



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Expression!!!

Only in Darjeeling.....

Only in Darjeeling...

...people sit in the dense fog and watch an entire soccer match, without knowing what the hell is going on in the field

Only in Darjeeling...

...people go to buy laangshyaa and end up watching carrom for hours

Only in Darjeeling...

...do you walk through the town once, and meet the same people ten times

Only in Darjeeling....

....do doodhwalas sell milk with less fat than skim milk

Only in Darjeeling....

....do the unemployed dress up better than the employed

Only in Darjeeling...

....the best dishes on the menu in any restaurant are thukpa and momo

Only in Darjeeling....

...do you find distance in Kilometres and places in Miles....

Cha mile, Dus mile, Baarah mile, Biis mile

Only in Darjeeling...

...can you jump off a train...take a leak.. and catch the train again...

Only in Darjeeling...

...the prettiest girl always elope with a driver

Only in Darjeeling...

Boys carry two different love letters in their back pockets.

Nepali ...and English written

Only in Darjeeling...

...Mann mann mai love mann mann mai break

Only in Darjeeling...

...a train gets caught in a traffic jam

Only in Darjeeling...

do you go to sleep with a bottle of hot water for warmth in winter....

....and wake up in the morning and

"daant moluus" with the same water !!!

Winner of the quiz published in the Vol 2, Issue 12 of Himalayan Times is

Nima Tamang
Congrats Nima

please collect your prize from our office.

The Correct answers for the quiz published in the last issue are

1. 1917
2. Chelling Simick Lepcha
3. National Highway 31A
4. Dr. Richard Keith Sprigg
5. St. Pauls School

In this issue Suraj Mani Pradhan
asks us-

1. Name the Poet who came to Kalimpong to meet DUDJOM RINPOCHE who was the head of the N'yingma Sect of Tibetan Buddhism.
2. Which institute in Darjeeling (at the time of its establishment in 1954) was then situated at Roy Villa on Lebong Cart Road?
3. Which famous Sikkimese had a Belgian wife (Elisa Maria) ?
4. What does Pedong mean in Tibetan?
5. Name the Nepali writer who was born on Februry 10th 1904 at SEPAIDHURA (on way from Darjeeling to Kurseong). The name of the house was "HEMABIR Cottage."

Answer the above question correctly
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(Hint: Local Cyber Cafes)

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Complete the above Jumble and send in your entry with the coupon given below by the 25th of November 2005 to win a free lunch for two at **Soods Garden Retreat, Kalimpong**. The correct answers for the jumble published in the last issue are

**NEWAR, SARKI, THAMI, SHERPA, YALMOO &
KIRATRAI**

The winner will be decided by a draw of lots. The names of all those who sent in correct answers for the jumble in the last issue are Ramesh Baraily, Mamta Rai, Sameer Ahmed, Raju Sherpa, Mangalmit Lepcha, Subhas C. Pradhan, Sabina Pariyar, Wangmendu Lama, Sawak Baraily, Nichola Pereira, Arpana Khawas, Meera Sharma, Pintoo Agarwal, Bikash Goel, Yozna Chhetri, Dip P. Gurung, Dawa Tsh. Bhutia, Gaurav Sharma, Manish Mittal, Mrs. Anita Rai, Kumar Chhetri and the winner is—

Mr. Kalyan Kumar
of 21st Mile, Pedong.

Please submit your entry in a plain sheet of paper along with this coupon. Please do not tear this page to submit your entry.

jumble
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Mange

A Menace in Kalimpong Canines

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All skin infections are not mange. Mange is often misdiagnosed by the pet keepers because itching may be confused with other itching disorders e.g.; flea allergy dermatitis, contact dermatitis, food allergic dermatitis etc. Only your vet can confirm the exact form of dermatitis.

Mange can cause a small, red, hairless area with big pimples and thickened skin oozing all over. Mange occurs when mites burrow under the skin.

One form of disease, demodectic mange, occurs when mites suddenly multiply beyond their normal levels. It typically results in hair loss and scaling around the eyelids, corners of the mouth and front legs. Roughly 90% of the puppies with minor demodectic mange on the face or front half of the body recover with no treatment at all! If the problem is getting worse, call your vet for advice and treatment.

A second form of the disease, commonly known as scabies, occurs when dogs pick up a strange lot of mites from another animal. This type of mange is not only contagious but intensely itchy

too. Intense itching is manifested by chewing, scratching and rubbing of the affected part. Chronic cases will show thickening, drying and wrinkling of the skin.

If you have one pet with scabies, chances are good that other pets may get it too. So they should be treated as well assuming that they have been exposed too.

As with other diseases self-medication has to be totally avoided in scabies too. However, fatty acid supplements can be given to pets as fatty acids play important role in correcting skin disorders without causing side effects. One popular brand of fatty acids, "Nutricat" is available in Kalimpong town.

Trimming the hair and washing with good dog shampoo (Clinar, Cisaflux etc) will help to keep the coat in good condition. Regular grooming removes scaly skin and scabs caused by mange. So, if followed regularly, your pet can be mange free.

Certain mange mites are picked up by direct contact with other animals or contaminated areas. If you see a dog scratching a lot don't let your dog near it.

Poorly nourished pets are generally at risk of contacting mange. So giving your pet a quality food can help provide protection.

Get enlightened:

1. Petrol, grease, motor oil etc are suitable for vehicles, not for your dogs. They don't work on pets at all. So please never pour them on your pooch.
2. Mites relish your skin as happily as your pet's skin. Mange is extremely contagious. Think twice before hugging a pet with scabies.
3. Visit your vet as soon as you notice your pet scratching. Treatment initiated at an early stage help your vet and pet both.

Send queries regarding pet keeping to **Dr. Naveen Pandey** at naveen_vet@yahoo.co.uk or call at **9832027208** for suggestions. No home visits.

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